**Billinge Chapel End Parish Council**

 The Public Hall, 216 Main Street, Billinge, WN5 7PE

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**Minutes of the Billinge Chapel End Parish Council full council meeting**

**Held on Monday 16th June 2025 at 7.30pm**

**at The Public Hall, 216 Main Street, Billinge, WN5 7PE.**

**Present:**
Chair Cllr Frank Gill, Cllr Fiona Gill, Cllr Bill Bradbury, Cllr Colin Betts, Cllr Bill Bates, Cllr Jeremy Barnes, Cllr M Webster
**Also in Attendance:**
Clerk

4 members of the public

**1. Apologies**

**Resolved:** Cllr Malcom Webster sent apologies in advance but was unable to attend part of the meeting

**2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

**Declarations:** None
**Dispensations:** None

**3. Minutes**

**3.1 Annual Parish Meeting 2025**
**Resolved:** Minutes approved and signed.
**3.2 Annual Parish Council Meeting – 19 May 2025**
**Resolved:** Minutes approved and signed.

**4. Public Participation**

 **Resident 1** – Concerns Regarding Speeding Traffic and Obstructive Parking on Main Street, Billinge

The resident raised concerns about vehicles regularly exceeding the 30mph speed limit on Main Street, particularly between Newton Road and the village centre. Additionally, vehicles parked on pavements near the shops were reported to be obstructing drivers' visibility when pulling out of junctions, as well as hindering pedestrians attempting to cross the road safely.

**Action:**The Council will draft a letter to the Highways Department requesting the installation of a mobile speed warning sign, to be initially positioned midway along Main Street and moved to various locations as needed. Furthermore, the Council will request the installation of bollards near the shops to prevent pavement parking and improve safety for both drivers and pedestrians.

**Resident 2 –** Speeding Traffic Concerns

The resident raised ongoing concerns about excessive speeding in the area and requested that the Council consider implementing a 20mph speed limit. In addition, the resident highlighted that approaching Pingot Road as particularly unsafe, citing the lack of a pedestrian crossing and the inadequate width of the pavement, which poses risks for pedestrians, especially children and vulnerable individuals.

**Actions and Response:**

* Cllr Bill Bradbury informed the resident that previous requests to the Borough Council regarding a pedestrian crossing approaching Pingot Road had unfortunately been declined on multiple occasions. He recommended that the resident start a petition to demonstrate local support and potentially strengthen the case for future consideration.
* Cllr Colin Betts to approach the Borough Council and the Clerk will write to the Highways Department to raise concerns about speeding in the area and request appropriate interventions.
* The Parish Council will consider the purchase of a council-owned speed camera should no adequate action be taken by the relevant authorities.

Resident also informs that Bankes Park has been awarded Green Flag Status**,** a national recognition for well-managed parks and green spaces. This award reflects the ongoing efforts of the local volunteers, and community groups in maintaining a clean, safe, and welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike.

**The Parish Council would like to extend its thanks to all those involved in achieving this standard and will continue to support initiatives that preserve and enhance the quality of our local green spaces.**

**Resident 3 –** Commented on Planning Application P/2025/0239/FUL

The Parish Council **noted** that the planning application for 105 Hillside is due to be considered at a Planning Committee meeting Tuesday, 24th June 25 with a recommendation to grant approval. It was further noted that no site visit has been arranged.

**Concerns were raised regarding several aspects of the application:**

* The application contains inaccuracies, particularly regarding traffic and parking impact. The development is expected to result in seven vehicles regularly accessing and exiting via a nearby T-junction, which raises significant concerns regarding traffic flow and road safety. These implications have not been adequately addressed or reflected in the application documentation. In addition, there are serious concerns about insufficient parking provision, which could lead to increase on-street parking and further congestion in the surrounding area.
* Despite there being 49 documents uploaded to the planning portal, residents who submitted objections were not consulted, notified, or made aware of the date of the committee meeting.
* As a result, residents were not given a fair opportunity to request to speak at the meeting in line with standard planning protocol.

Cllr Colin Betts will ask for clarification on whether a request to speak can still be submitted on behalf of the community, given the lack of public notification.

**The Parish Council strongly objects to the lack of transparency and resident engagement in this process and will consider making a formal representation to the Planning Department.**

**5. Review of Delegation Arrangements to Committees, Working Groups and Outside Bodies**

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and approve the Terms of Reference and delegation arrangements as follows:

**Estimates Committee (minimum 3 members)
5.1.** The Terms of Reference for the Estimates Committee were **received and approved.
5.2.** Membership of the Estimates Committee was **approved.
5.3.** It wasagreed that the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will be **elected** at the first meeting of the committee.

**Personnel Committee (minimum 3 members)
5.4.** The Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee were **received and approved.
5.5.** Membership of the Personnel Committee was **approved.
5.6.** It was **agreed** that the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will be **elected** at the first meeting of the committee.

**Working Groups and Other Bodies**The following Terms of Reference were **received and approved:**

**5.7. Planning Advisory Working Group (minimum 2 members)
5.8. Billinge Beacon / Local Life Working Group (minimum 2 members)
5.9. Press Advisor Working Person (minimum 1 member)
5.10. Events Working Group (minimum 2 members)
5.11. Social Media Working Group (minimum 2 members)
5.12. Dam Slacks Play Area Working Group (minimum 2 members)
5.13. Eddleston Trust (minimum 1 member)**

It was **noted** that all Chairs and Vice-Chairs for committees will be **elected at their respective** first meetings unless otherwise **resolved.**

**6. Planning Applications**

**6.2 P/2025/0307/FUL
Ward:** Billinge and Seneley Green **Location:** Houghwood Golf Course, Crank Road, Kings Moss, St Helens **Proposal:** Single-storey rear extension including basement changing rooms (previouslyapproved) and gym below with roof terrace above, along with conversion of first floor into a 14-bedroom hotel and additional parking. **Applicant:** Houghwood Golf Ltd **Comments:** No comments were made.

**6.3 P/2025/0291/HHFP
Ward:** Billinge and Seneley Green **Location:** 13 Carr Mill Road, Billinge, St Helens WN5 7TW **Proposal:** Porch and bay windows to front elevation, single-storey side extensions following demolition of garage, front and rear dormers, raising of ridge height, single-storey flat-roofed rear extension, and application of render to the rear elevation. **Applicant:** Mr & Mrs Barbara & Gary Ashall **Comments:** No comments were made.

**6.4 P/2025/0317/HHFP
Ward:** Billinge and Seneley Green **Location:** 22 Billinge Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield, St Helens WN4 0RE
Proposal: Side extension, rear dormer with patio doors and Juliet balcony, new front doors, and three rooflights to the front roof plane. **Applicant:** Mr Leo Arkelaos **Comments:** No comments were made as the location falls outside of the Parish Council's area.

**7. POLICY & PROCEDURE**

The Council reviewed and considered the constitutional and governance documents for the 2025/26 municipal year**.** It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** and **adopt** the following:

**7.1** Adoption of the St Helens Council Code of Conduct for Councillors **7.2** Billinge Parish Council Standing Orders **7.3** Billinge Parish Council Publication Scheme **7.4** Billinge Parish Council Complaints Procedure **7.5** Billinge Parish Council Disciplinary Procedure **7.6** Billinge Parish Council Grievance Procedure **7.7** Billinge Parish Council Grant Awarding Policy **7.8** Billinge Parish Council Environmental Policy **7.9** Filming Protocol **– *Deferred for discussion at the July meeting*
7.10** Billinge Parish Council Co-Option Arrangements **7.11** Billinge Parish Council Financial Regulations **7.12** Billinge Parish Council Accessibility Charter

**All listed documents were reviewed and approved, except for item 7.9, which will be brought forward for consideration in July 2025.**

To support effective oversight, it was **agreed** that different policies will be allocated to individual councillors for review and responsibility during the year. Assignments will be confirmed and documented separately.

**8. Deferred Policy Documents**

**Noted:** The following policies will be reviewed at a future meeting:

* Risk Management Policy
* Risk Assessment
* Data Protection Policy
* Investment Policy

**9. Fire Risk Management: Current Status & Required Actions**

The Council reviewed the current position regarding fire risk management for Billinge Parish Council. The following documents were noted and discussed:

**9.1** The Fire Risk Assessment dated 15 May 2025, submitted by Dennis McDonnell and the Clerk. **9.2** The Policy for the Management of Fire Safety (two documents). **9.3** A further email submitted by Dennis McDonnell outlining proposed actions and confirming availability (email printed and circulated).

It was **RESOLVED** that Dennis McDonnell will carry out the Fire Risk Assessments for Billinge Parish Council properties at a cost of £60, as outlined in his communication.

**The Council expressed its thanks for Mr McDonnell’s continued support and professional input into ensuring compliance with fire safety responsibilities.**

**10. Appointment of Internal Auditor**

The Council considered the letter of appointment from Jo O’Donoghue to act as the Internal Auditor for the 2024/25 financial year. Although this is the first time Jo will be auditing for Billinge Parish Council, members noted her excellent reputation and extensive experience as an auditor.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the appointment of Jo O’Donoghue as Internal Auditor for2024/25, confident in her ability to provide a thorough and professional audit service.

**11. Finance & Governance Year-End Review**

**11.1** The Council **noted** receipt of the 2024/25 Year-End Internal Audit Report, received in June 2025 from Jo O’Donoghue, Internal Auditor.

**11.2** Issues arising from the Internal Audit Report were **noted** and **discussed** by members.

**11.3** The Council considered any points of concern or recommendations raised by the auditor.

**11.4** Actions to be taken following the Internal Audit Report were **reviewed** and **noted.**

**11.5** The Council confirmed the steps required to address the issues highlighted in the audit report.

**11.6** It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the 2024/25 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

**11.7** It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** Section 2 – Accounting Statements of the 2024/25 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

**11.8** The Council noted the Notice of Public Rights Publication Period, which will run **from 1st July 2025 to 11th August 2025.**

**11.9** It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** payment of £300.00 to Jo O’Donoghue for internal audit services for the 2024/25 financial year.

**12. Financial Oversight and Approval**

12.1 The Council **approved the Payment Schedule** for April and May 2025.

12.2 The Council **approved the bank reconciliations** for April and May 2025.

12.3 The Payment Schedule for June 2025 was **approved and authorised**.

12.4 The Council **approved the cost of £100.00** for the new account’s

spreadsheet.

12.5 The Council **noted the publication** of all items over £100.00 on the Parish Council website in line with transparency regulations.

12.6 The Council **received and approved the final bank reconciliations** as of 31 March 2025.

12.7 The Council **noted the authorised signatories** for the bank accounts. It was agreed to **add the new Clerk, Karen Newton**, and to **remove Hazel Broatch, Steven Gardner, and Terence McEvoy** from the list of authorised signatories. The current signatories remain Cllr F. Gill and Cllr B. Bradbury.

**13. Public Hall Reading Room**

The Council received an update on the Public Hall Reading Room project. It was noted that a surveyor has visited the site and advised that the planning and approval process is expected to take approximately three months.

Cllr Colin Betts requested that the surveyor inform him once the application is ready to be submitted to Planning, so that he can escalate the matter and help move the project forward.

The Council **agreed** to form a **Working Group** to oversee the progress and management of the new build. The following members were appointed to the group:

* **Cllr Colin Betts**
* **Cllr Bill Bradbury**
* **Cllr Webster**

The Council also **RESOLVED** to **accept** the Terms of Reference for the Working Group, which will guide its responsibilities, authority, and reporting duties.

The group will provide regular progress reports to the full Council and ensure effective liaison with surveyors, contractors, and planning authorities.

**14. Website and Email Accounts**

The Council received an update regarding the website and councillor email accounts. It was noted that Cllr Bradbury and Cllr Betts are still experiencing difficulties accessing their official email accounts.

The Clerk will contact James Reilly to request assistance in resolving these access issues.

It was also **noted** that the Parish Council website is functioning well, and no further issues were reported at this time.

**15. Social Media Access**

The Council discussed matters relating to social media access and the ongoing management of Parish Council accounts. Following discussion, it was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting to allow further consideration and clarification of responsibilities**.**

**16. Security Lights and Side Gate Installation**

The Council considered the ongoing works relating to site security. It was noted that security lights have now been installed, and the alarm box is in place. The Council is awaiting a price for the installation of new side gates, and it was further agreed that a full alarm system and CCTV cameras should also be installed to enhance site security.

Cllr Bill Bradbury **proposed** that the Council proceed with the necessary works, including the alarm and camera systems. The proposal was **seconded** by Cllr Colin Betts, and it was **RESOLVED** to continue with the works as outlined.

**17. Reports from Parish Council Representatives**

The Council received updates from parish council representatives.

**Cllr Bill Bates** reported that the Picnic in the Park event had been well attended, with excellent feedback received from residents.

The next scheduled event is a VJ Day Tea Dance, which will be held on **17th August 2025** at St Mary’s. A grant request has been received in relation to this event. It was also noted that the beacon will be lit for VJ Day, as it was not lit for VE Day.

Additionally, a Craft Fayre is planned for **31st October 2025**, and further updates regarding future events will be provided in due course.

**Cllr Frank Gill** provided an update on the Eddleston Trust. He confirmed that they are **still in contact with Book Cycle** and intends to **offer the Trust’s support to that initiative**, meaning the **Public Reading Room will not be used** for this purpose.

It was further noted that the Trust’s accounts remain healthy, with sound investments currently in place.

**Cllr Webster** joined the meeting later due to a prior engagement. Upon arrival, he provided a report on the Tree Planting Initiative, highlighting potential planting in boggy areas around Billinge to help with local flooding mitigation.

The Council welcomed this proposal and agreed to consider suitable sites in conjunction with the Woodland Trust’s free tree planting scheme.

**Cllr Betts** reported that the car park had recently been cleared of weeds and jet washed. In conjunction with the gardener, both will continue to maintain the area regularly.

The Council expressed its **thanks and appreciation to Cllr Betts for his excellent work** in keeping the car park tidy and well-maintained.

**18. Reports and Correspondence (Information Only)**

The Council **noted** that no police report had been received, and efforts are ongoing to locate the PCSO for updates.

It was also **noted** that a grant has been received from Billinge in Bloom, which will be reviewed and considered at the July meeting.

**19. Aims and Objectives for 2025/26**

The Council discussed the proposed aims and objectives for the 2025/26 municipal year. Key points of discussion included the need for clearer and more meaningful objectives to guide the Council’s work effectively.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer final approval of the Aims and Objectives to the September meeting, allowing time to develop and present a more comprehensive and focused document.

**20. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

**Confirmed:** Next meeting to be held on Monday 21st July 2025

**Meeting Closed:** 21:09

**Signed: Karen Newton**
Karen Newton – Clerk to the Council
**Date:** 19/06/2025